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Office of the Governor

October 19, 2018

Dear Grant Committee:

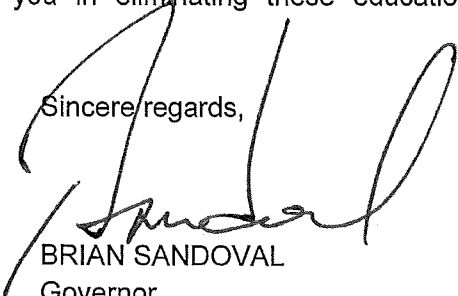
I write on behalf of the Nevada Department of Education in support of our Homeless Children and Youth Program's proposal for School House Connection's State Partnerships. The purpose of the proposal is focused on improving academic outcomes for the 17,000 homeless students in Nevada. Considering that this population of students faces extreme challenges in graduating from high school, I support the forthcoming activities that remove barriers for this most vulnerable group of students.

As an organization which supports and advocates for homeless youth in Nevada, our Department of Education has endeavored to make positive, sustainable changes to all areas of the McKinney-Vento Program. The staff has already been successful in the overall identification of students, in building community based support, and in building a leadership team that supports this cause. This proposal, if funded, will build upon those efforts by supporting the work being done in Nevada to reduce educational gaps created by homelessness, improve opportunities for a brighter future, and create a better overall quality of life.

This is a transitional period for Nevada. A new governor will be elected in November and inaugurated in January, but I am confident that the State Coordinator, Karen Gordon, along with the Title I Team will be able to lead the major initiatives found in this proposal to reduce educational disparities for the homeless youth in Nevada. Education is a primary focus for the gubernatorial candidates, and they have campaigned to maintain the significant reforms and positive improvements that I initiated while Governor. The Department staff, including State Superintendent Canavero, will join my staff as we work with the Governor Elects transition team.

We look forward to working with you in eliminating these educational disparities in our community.

Sincere regards,


BRIAN SANDOVAL
Governor

CREATING CASH, CAPACITY AND COORDINATION:
A PROJECT FOCUSED ON NEVADA'S CHILDREN AND YOUTH EXPERIENCING
HOMELESSNESS

I. Problem Statement

The purpose of the federal McKinney-Vento Act is to ensure that all students experiencing homelessness encounter engaging, equitable and barrier-free access to educational success. In order to meet the intent of this purpose, homeless students will need positive academic settings and additional support aimed at meeting the Nevada state academic achievement standards. The need for changing the trajectory of the lives of Nevada's homeless children and youth is crucial.

As of January 2018, there were 473,647 students enrolled in Nevada's K-12 public schools (district and charter combined). Three entities—Clark County School District, Washoe County School District, and the State Public Charter School Authority—represent 89% of the total statewide enrollment, with the balance distributed among the 15 other districts. As the needs for this proposal are considered, it is important that the scope of work align with the larger frameworks currently existing in Nevada. Nevada's Strategic Plan, ESSA, and State Improvement Plan (STIP) are presently well aligned. A strategic focus on improving opportunity gaps for students of color, in poverty, ELs and those with disabilities has been established.

The National Center for Homeless Education, (NCHE) Extranet Data Base has identified 17,000 children and youth enrolled in Nevada's public schools during 2016-2017 year, (Ed Facts). This makes it very clear that Nevada has an extreme need to focus on removing barriers to participation, retention, and success in school. The need to increase high school graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness becomes a top priority. Both Goal #1 and Goal #2 within this proposal are focused on this effort. The process begins with a needs assessment. The Nevada Department of Education, McKinney-Vento Homeless Coordinator, annually reviews program data and state-level activities to identify strengths, needs, and priorities. The needs assessment questions are organized around key focus areas for the work of the State Education Agency, (SEA) in homeless education and reflect provisions in the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Nevada's "needs" identified in the assessment include: (1) Increasing high school graduation rates for students experiencing homelessness and (2) Increasing collaboration between schools, and community-based organizations.

Looking deeper into both of these identified needs, it becomes evident that some elements at the Nevada State Program level are lacking. These areas of need are further reflected within our Local Education Agency (LEA) programs. The National Center for Homeless Education's standards identifies sixteen program standards, four of which are high priority for Nevada:

1. The LEA **informs** all unaccompanied homeless youth of the educational and related opportunities available to them, (Standard 9)
2. LEA's coordinate and collaborate with programs within the LEA to **increase identification of homeless students**, plan support activities, align procedures and practices, and leverage resources.(Standard 11)
3. LEA's **coordinate and collaborate** with community agencies, organizations, and

business partners to deliver comprehensive services, in an efficient manner, expand or leverage resources, and participate in policy discussions.

(Standard 12)

4. The LEA **utilizes data** for needs assessment and program planning.(Standard 16)

In the grand scope of the implementation of the McKinney-Vento program in Nevada, a need for two specific systemic changes has presented itself. This proposal has designed these changes to work in synergy with each other, as well as in alignment to the needs and goals. First, a need to change the system at the state level and within districts for determining the amount and uses of Title I, Part A homeless set aside funding is critical. Second, a need to remove barriers for the obtainment of high school credits across the state also becomes critical. The following discusses them more in depth.

In simultaneously reviewing both SEA and LEA needs, the State Coordinator has identified root causes of these high level needs. The reality is that if the LEAs do not have a system for determining the needs of their McKinney-Vento students and programs or an equitable method for determining and tracking the quality and functionality of Title I set-aside funds, then its program becomes underfunded. Both urban and rural district liaisons, report that their capacity is an enormous concern. This information prompted the Nevada State Coordinator to begin pursuing an adequate and equitable distribution of funding across the state of Nevada. A further review of Nevada's Electronic Plans, Application, Grants, and Expenditures system (ePAGE) has revealed that there presently is no systematic method for determining the Federal Title I district homeless set-aside funds. Therefore, the following needs have been prioritized;

Need #1: To increase Title I A funding set aside amounts. Currently our 17,000 children and youth are funded through Title I A, set aside dollars at 1.6% of the total Title I budget. This is about \$109.00 per student.

Need #2: To update state-level guidance and procedures in terms of set-aside funding for Homeless Education. By doing so, engage in a systematic process for creating state level guidance and procedures to create, measure, and track, McKinney-Vento/Title I needs assessment, budget, and the evaluation of funding.

Targeted data can be used to measure success in this area. There currently is no evidence of a system for determining the amount and best uses of Title I homeless set-aside funds. Additionally, the Nevada Department of Education has not established any collaborative groups aimed at meeting this critical need for creating state level guidance. Finally, there is no system to address how to provide guidance and procedures for removing barriers to high school graduation through the use of partial credits earned for Nevada's homeless youth. This grant, we will insure that progress is made in each of these areas.

The current McKinney-Vento State Coordinator is highly skilled to coordinate this effort. Her background is in the Credit Union industry, literacy, Special Education and school-improvement. Within the SEA, she has strong support from NDE State Leadership, Title I team, Foster, Migrant, School Improvement, Special Education, Early Child Care, Safe and Healthy Schools, and Adult Education. Furthermore, within the LEAs she has worked with Clark County as the Director of School Improvement (SIG) grants for one year prior to the current position, and this has provided a surface level of understanding for our largest school district. Each LEA Liaison has positively interacted with their State Coordinator. The State Coordinator has familiarized herself with some community

agencies including Safe Nest, Communities in Schools, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, Eighth Judicial District Court, Restorative Justice Alliance, and the Nevada Disability Advocacy & Law Center.

II. Anticipated Goals/Activities

Goal #1

By November 2019, the Nevada Department of Education will increase Title I funding set-aside amounts to better meet the needs of ALL Nevada homeless students as measured by increased levels of set aside funding. A systematic process for determining the method, implementation, and evaluation of Title I set-aside funds for Homeless Education will be established and implemented. The intent is to insure that including this systems level work and the activities for implementation will be completed by establishing three different stakeholder committees: Homeless Educational Community Committee, Title I & Homeless Education Leadership Team Committee; and Committee of McKinney-Vento Liaisons. The following provides a complete description of each committee and its projected responsibilities.

A. Homeless Educational Community Committee

Description of the Committee:

The responsibility of this committee is to serve as advisory group. Its aim is to provide unique perspectives to inform school, district, and state personnel of possible barriers, solutions, benefits, and services that may be available to homeless students. Responsibilities of this committee are to increase awareness, identification, and to work collaboratively with state and local government to better address student needs. This committee will meet in person at least three times during the first year, and two times each year thereafter. This committee will establish effective system level coherence and alignment aimed at ensuring the educational and social success of Nevada's homeless children and youth. This has been sorely lacking. (M.V. Standards 1, 2 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, & 10)

Members -Representation will be requested from:

Juvenile Court Hearing Master, Communities in Schools Chief Executive Officer, Nevada Partnership for Homeless Youth, Nevada Disability Advocacy and Law Center rights advocate, Safe Nest Education and Training Manager, Young Adults (2-4) having experienced Homelessness during their public education, Parents (2-4) of children experiencing homelessness, Child Care Unit Chief, Nevada Department of Health and Human Services, State Coordinator of Homeless Education, School House Connection Representative, National Center for Homeless Education Representative

Activities are to

1. Create a statewide Homeless Children and Youth Needs Assessment using models already in use from other states.
2. Within the Needs Assessment, place an emphasis on chronic absenteeism data and utilize early warning signs to identify signs for students at risk of dropping out of school.
3. Collect data and information regarding existing barriers for all students Pre-K - 12th through a statewide survey.
4. Create a method to evaluate the effectiveness of the new set-aside funding amounts and determine a method to track budgeted expenses versus expended dollars.
5. Review notes, and action items from the other two committees.
6. Create Title I homeless education set-aside guidance.

B. Title I & Homeless Education Leadership Team : Nevada Department of Education

Description of the Committee:

This team is responsible for combining the information from the community and liaison groups in

order to inform and guide state procedures and Nevada Department of Education Superintendent Guidance Memos the superintendent memos. This group will oversee communication, logistical Title I set-aside funds and McKinney-Vento, as well as provide training and technical assistance both internally at the state department level and externally at the district and community agency levels. The group will meet on a monthly basis to check-in, communicate, and discuss topics as related to the activities listed below.

Members:

Chief State School Officer, Office of Student and School Support, Director, State Coordinator of Homeless Education, Title I Director, Title I Program Specialists (2) Foster Care State Coordinator, Adult Education Programs Supervisor, Department of Health and Human Services Representative, Head-Start Representative, 1-2 McKinney-Vento Liaisons.

Activities to:

1. Review the creation of the district needs assessment, as developed by the community committee and oversee approval.
2. Set up an action/implementation plan to complete during this 12 month cycle and share with other newly created committees.
3. Prepare all written documentation that aligns with the work of the other two committees. These will include procedures, guidance documents, and Nevada Department of Education Guidance Memos.
4. Prepare and implement a communication plan for each step in this “change” process. This will include external and internal methods of communication including e-mails, Title I Newsletter, e-mails to the Nevada Department of Education Cabinet, web-page, e-note, and e-page postings.
5. Create and conduct training for overall process, needs assessment implementation, and evaluation processes
6. Create and maintain synergy between the community task force, Title I COP, and McKinney-Vento Liaisons to ensure stakeholder input and follow through
7. Maintain communication between the Nevada Department of Education Cabinet, and LEA upper level superintendents across the state.

C. Committee of McKinney-Vento Liaisons

Description of the Committee

This group will be made up of select McKinney-Vento Liaisons. It will be comprised of individuals with feet-on –the –ground, know about specific barriers, and best practices in the work of homeless education. The group will meet 3 times per year in person, and another 3 times per year virtually. They will be responsible for communicating to the other two newly formed committee’s information about barriers, logistical challenges. This will be the group that keeps all committees focused on children and youth.

Members:

Liaisons from the largest, smallest, rural, urban, and suburban areas within the state. A cross-section of those with extensive experience, (10-20 years), as well as those with less experience will be newly established.

Activities to:

1. Create a method for determining Liaison capacity.
2. Examine the M.V. Needs Assessment and to determine the best method for the team at the district or school level.
3. Review the MV Needs Assessment to identify barriers, strengths, or missed opportunities.
4. Set MV Goals for improving the McKinney-Vento Program and to prioritize these goals.
5. Review the procedures established by the State Committee and Community Committee and to communicate feedback, input, and best practices

6. Support district, community, and state work on homeless education, forever keeping the student interest at the front.
7. Focus efforts on using early warning signs to identify homeless students who are at risk of dropping out.

Goal #2

By November 2019, the NDE will create state level guidance and procedures to support Nevada's children and youth experiencing homelessness as measured by increased liaison capacity, implementation, the use of the Needs Assessment Tool for Title I Part A set-aside, and increased graduation rates for homeless students, and the decreased drop-out and chronic absenteeism rates.

Activities to:

1. Hire a person to perform an analysis of the methods that the state of California has used to implement its procedures in response) Assembly Bill 1806- Partial Credit Bill).

Deliverables would include: A one page document summarizing why this change is needed, a history of this problem in Nevada, a suggested model policy, recommended roles and responsibilities, common concerns and questions, calculations, formulas and guidelines to determine the way partial credit is determined and School Registrar/Counselor procedures for awarding partial credits.

2. Create an action plan for the State Leadership Committee aimed at increasing to graduation rates and decrease drop-out and chronic absenteeism rates.
3. State Leadership Committee to begin the set-aside Title I funding change process state-wide using a prepared project management plan and timeline
4. Provide written memos, e-mails, and web- page postings to accompany each step in the change process for set-aside, needs assessment, and evaluation of programs and funding.
5. Leverage the change process using the three identified committees described in goal one of this proposal, Homeless Education Community Task Force, State Leadership Committee, & McKinney-Vento Liaison Committee.

III. Leadership Team

Nevada's state education structure includes a Chief State School Officer who is in charge of the supervision of the state's public education system. Nevada's current Chief State School Officer (CSSO), is Dr. Steve Canavero. He has, with the approval of Nevada's current Governor, Brian Sandoval, designated the State Coordinator for Homeless Education, Karen Gordon to be responsible for the day to day activities of this project. The following table identifies the title and responsibilities of each member of this team.

Title	Responsibilities are to:
Chief State School Officer	Provide high level support, continuous effective and transparent communications. Ensure active involvement of many people at senior levels. Find ways to cultivate networks of support. Engage Superintendents from each district in Nevada. Facilitate communication with key Nevada stakeholders for policy and practice recommendations for Nevada's homeless youth identification.
Office of Student	Provide mid to high level support. Ensure that leadership members remain together and are never about a single person. Communicate that leadership on this team

and School Support, Director	is shared, and supported. Engage all stakeholders and key personnel at district levels.
State Coordinator or Homeless Education	Provide assurance of completion of goals and support at all levels. Manage goals within the grant. Keep all levels of leadership informed. Engage all others and assist them to believe in what they are doing. Build internal and external partners as champions of this cause. Lay a foundation to better sustained support for this reform work, especially if transition within leadership takes place.
Title I, Director	Provide support at the Title I level. Engage Title I Directors, in each district within Nevada. Assist in guiding the Title I team to support the homeless set-aside procedures and to work individually with each Title I Director to develop buy-in at the state, district, and school levels.
State Coordinator, Foster Care	Make sure the project maintains a sense of urgency, and recognize and build upon the successes of the past. Look for ways to leverage this work for Foster Care Students in Nevada. Identify opportunities for improvement throughout this process and into the sustainment period.
Title I, Program Specialists (2) (Chief Communicator)	Provide districts with the right resources and messaging to inform stakeholders on each goal in a timely manner. Assure that communication is not one size fits all, but is built around specific needs where the district, state, school, and community receive information relative to their efforts. Look for ways to circulate the message beyond the standard channels of communication. Social media, videos, website,

IV. Sustainability Plan

This proposal's grant goals and action plans have been designed to continue even after grant funding has ended. This is because new frameworks are being constructed during the grant-funded year. Three frameworks will be established as a base and constructed to allow for additions every year thereafter. The first framework will be established to provide for increased levels of funding, not only during the funded year but always. This has been designed by establishing state-wide Title I/Homeless Education set-aside funding using a system for establishing appropriate amounts, and monitoring use of the funds. A second framework planned to be built during the grant funded year is to create increased LEA capacity. This will be established by creating three new committees during the grant funded year; Homeless Education Community Task Force, Title I & Homeless Education Leadership Team at the Nevada Department of Education, and Committee of McKinney-Vento Liaisons. Finally, as the funding and capacity increases, there exists a need to leverage the state-level executive authority to direct changes. Because the Homeless Education Leadership Team will have previously worked and leveraged upper level authority during the grant funded year the team will have experience with these internal processes. Future changes may be implemented using state level authority using the same procedures going forward. This will improve the state level continuous improvement process for the Education of Homeless Children and Youth program.

As the activities for this proposal get underway, Nevada's Governor Sandoval will be leaving office. A new governor will be elected in November and inaugurated in January. With that in mind, a transition plan has been created. In a review of the Leadership Team chart, (pg. 6) it is important to note, that every role/person on this team will remain in place. The only exception may be the position of State Superintendent. It has been agreed that should Dr. Steve Canavero leave, he will ensure a seamless transition and share this project, its contents, and the needed support, directly with his replacement. Additionally, the State McKinney-Vento Coordinator committed to continuing

the implementation of this plan in the future. Her Title I colleagues, have recently been involved with McKinney-Vento training and are committed to this project as well. They will hold places on the Leadership Team. One last important note is that the scope of work within this proposal aligns with the larger frameworks currently existing in Nevada. Nevada's Strategic Plan, ESSA, and State Improvement Plan (STIP) are well aligned. A focus on improving opportunity gaps for students of color, in poverty, ELs and those with disabilities has been established. Even with a change in our leadership, this focus is will not change. Specific STIP strategies, which align with the listed goals for the education of children and youth experiencing homelessness include: (1) Utilize a framework for aligned school improvement approach to inform school and LEA needs assessment, planning, evaluation, funding, and interventions, (2) Implement SEA-LEA continuous improvement cycle, (3) Empower Families, (4) Build internal systems and effectiveness, and (5) Demonstrate equity across all Department members to strengthen programs from increased engagement and a reflection of equity for all students

Goal 1: Increase Title I funding set-aside amounts to better meet the needs of ALL homeless populations.

Method:

By the 2019-2020 school year, this newly designed method will be implemented for the first time. In order to sustain this change, the needs, progress, and evaluation of this system will be required. The three committees will continue to assemble in order to collectively, and from a variety of vantage points, work toward the common goal of improving education for our children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Time-Line Sustainability: Dec. 2019 and thereafter

Community Committee Activities

- Revisit the survey data from one year ago and check on progress of removing barriers.
- Create a new time-line for activities to take place during the 2019-2020 year to removing barriers.
- Use data and trends to collectively re-prioritize barriers as needed

State Leadership Committee Activities

- Conduct a focus group to determine strengths and needs of the piloted Title I, -Homeless Needs Assessment
- Respond to the results of the community task force analysis of barriers and work to prioritize the next important task by repeating the same functions as in year one, but with the new priority item/s

Liaison Committee Activities

- Continue the work of undertaking special activities on behalf of homeless unaccompanied or out of school youth
- Track and implement priorities and goals using data and evidence based practices
- Consider previously brain stormed ideas such as assigning case managers at each school or sub-set, or at the very least high school to track and provide early intervention
- Create an implementation plan to address academic gaps with regard to credit and partial credit earning
- Consider moving forward with the Retention of homeless youth and restorative justice

Goal 2

Create state level guidance and procedures to influence positive adult behavior changes to impact the support of Nevada's children and youth experiencing homelessness.

Using the researched work from California, use the three committees and systems processes described in goal one, to implement the change in process with regard to policy, procedure, guidance memos and implementation of new ways for students to receive credit.

